



PAT McCRORY
Governor

NICHOLAS J. TENNYSON
Secretary

MEMOTO: Post Combined Public Hearing Meeting Attendees

FROM: Kevin Moore, P.E.
Roadway Design Project Engineer

DATE: November 15, 2016

SUBJECT: Project 35993.1.1 (U-4700) Caldwell, Catawba, and Burke Counties
F. A. Project NHF-321(18)
Proposed US 321 Widening from US 70 in Hickory to Southwest Boulevard in Lenoir

Post Combined Public Hearing Meeting Summary

Post Combined Public Hearing meetings were held on September 12, 2016 and October 12, 2016 in NCDOT’s Century Center conference rooms. The purpose of the meetings was to review verbal and written comments received during the comment period after the U-4700 Combined Public Hearing.

Two Combined Public Hearings were held for Project U-4700. The first hearing was on Monday, July 11, 2016 at the Winkler Activity Center in Hickory and the second hearing was on Tuesday, July 12, 2016 at The Broyhill Center Room. Pre-Hearing Open Houses were from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and the Combined Public Hearing began at 7:00 p.m.

The following people met to discuss the comments:

Name	Agency/Unit	9/12/16	10/12/16
Kevin Moore	NCDOT – Roadway	✓	✓
Brenda Moore	NCDOT – Roadway	✓	✓
Glenn Mumford	NCDOT – Roadway	✓	✓
Beverly Robinson	NCDOT – Project Development	✓	✓
Eugene Tarascio	NCDOT – Project Development		✓
Teresa Bruton	NCDOT – Design-Build	✓	
K. Zak Hamidi	NCDOT – Design-Build	✓	
Jim Dunlop	NCDOT – Congestion Management	✓	✓
Elise Groundwater	NCDOT – Congestion Management	✓	✓ *
Diane Wilson	NCDOT – HES Public Involvement	✓	✓
Daniel C. Sellers	NCDOT – TPB	✓	
Katina Lucas	NCDOT – Program Development/TIP	✓	✓
Pat Tuttle	NCDOT – Location and Surveys	✓	✓
James Jeffreys	NCDOT – Location and Surveys	✓ *	
Michael Pettyjohn	NCDOT – Division 11		✓ *

(continued on the next page)



Name	Agency/Unit	9/12/16	10/12/16
Dean Ledbetter	NCDOT – Division 11	✓ *	✓
Mark Stafford	NCDOT – Division 12	✓ *	
Larry Carpenter	NCDOT – Division 12	✓ *	✓ *
Michael Poe	NCDOT – Division 12	✓ *	✓
John Marshall	Western Piedmont COG	✓ *	✓ *
Anthony Starr	Western Piedmont COG	✓ *	
Cody Moneymaker	Western Piedmont COG		✓ *
Andrea Surrat	City of Hickory	✓ *	✓
Brandon McInnis	RK&K – Roadway Design	✓	✓
Brian Peeler	RK&K – Traffic	✓	
Jeff Weisner	AECOM – Traffic	✓ *	
Teresa Gresham	Kimley-Horn – Project Development	✓	✓
Aaron Heustess	Kimley-Horn – Project Development	✓	

* *Joined by phone*

Executive Summary

Project Description:

NCDOT and FHWA propose to widen US 321 to a six lane median divided facility from just north of the US 70 interchange in Hickory (Catawba County) to the Southwest Boulevard (SR 1933) interchange in Lenoir (Caldwell County). The proposed improvements involve approximately 13.5 miles of existing US 321 with a majority of the roadway located in Catawba and Caldwell Counties and 0.3 miles in Burke County. The purpose of the project is to reduce congestion on US 321 in order to achieve level of service D or better in the design year (2040).

More information is at the project website, <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/us321widening/>.

Public Hearing Summary:

During the Pre-Hearing Open Houses and Public Hearings, a total of 154 people signed in on July 11, 2016 and 117 people signed in on July 12, 2016. Written comments were received from a total of 54 citizens at the hearings and in the comment period ending August 31, 2016. All verbal comments from the public hearing and written comments returned during the comment period are summarized below.

No preferences were given during the question and answer period of the Public Hearing. In written comments, some citizens indicated a preference for or opposition to a particular alternative for the Falls Avenue and Grace Chapel Road intersections. The following tables summarize the results:

Falls Avenue Intersection		
Alternative	Preferred (“For”)	Opposed (“Against”)
#1 Superstreet	-	4
#2 Partial Clover Interchange	1	1
#3 Tight Diamond Interchange	6	-

Grace Chapel Road Intersection		
Alternative	Preferred ("For")	Opposed ("Against")
#1 Superstreet*	2	-
#2 Flyover	1	-
#3 Trumpet Interchange	2	-
*Citizens that preferred Alternative #1 also wanted a traffic signal at the intersection.		

The post hearing meeting was opened with introductions and a brief summary of the alternatives presented at the public hearing. Attendees discussed the verbal and written comments received (summarized below), and then identified NCDOT's recommended alternative.

**A. COMMENTS BY PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS AND
NCDOT RESPONSES**

An asterisk (*) by "Response" indicates a direct response to the comment is required.

Comment

1. Phil Shell (6724 Lakeview Terrace, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 464, July 11 Line 816, July 12 Line 387, and July 12 Line 486

Comment: Mr. Shell had multiple questions.

(1) He wants to know if the bridge is going to be elevated. He is worried that residents in Lakeview Terrace will be looking at the elevated bridge crossing, and is concerned about what the proposed bridge will look like. He also asked if a noise study is being done to account for increased noise due to the elevated bridge and removal of the woods, and requested noise abatement.

Response: The new bridge will be between 25 and 30 feet higher than the existing bridge. There is a 23-foot required clearance from the bottom of the bridge to the top of the railroad tracks, which is adjacent to the river. The look of the bridge is not known at this time. The City of Hickory is considering funding enhancements that will make it more aesthetically appealing.

A noise study has been conducted for the project corridor. The red hatched areas on the hearing maps are the areas that have been highlighted for further study. A final noise analysis will be done for the entire corridor prior to final design. The Lakeview Terrace neighborhood is not an area that was identified as an area that requires further study during the initial traffic noise analysis.

(2) He asked for verification that drivers from the west will have to cross the bridge and do a U-turn to access the Lakeview Terrace neighborhood.

Response: That is correct.

(3) He wants to know if a study has been done to consider elevating the railroad rather than elevating the road, since the trains run infrequently.

Response: An elevated railroad bridge was considered but not studied in detail due to the anticipated physical impacts of a railroad bridge. Several options were studied, including crossing the railroad at-grade, an elevated road bridge, and one bridge versus two bridges.

(4) He thinks an expressway on US 321 from Lenoir to Hickory with three exits (one each for Hickory, Granite Falls, and Lenoir) is all that is needed. He is concerned that billions of dollars are going to be spent on the road and the level of service (LOS) for the road is only going to be improved from the existing LOS E today to a LOS D after construction, which is still not a “passing grade.”

Response: The road is being designed to operate at an LOS D in 2040. LOS D is the level of service threshold commonly considered to be acceptable by NCDOT and FHWA. Today, the majority of US 321 and the intersections along the corridor operate at a LOS E. Without improvements, 12 of 13 segments along the mainline and 16 of 18 intersections are projected to operate at a LOS F by the year 2035. With improvements, the corridor and intersections are projected to operate at a LOS B or C immediately, and a LOS D by the design year of 2040.

2. Patty Thompson (6664 Lakeshore Drive, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 616 and July 11 Line 799

Comment: Ms. Thompson had multiple questions:

(1) She wants to know how the bridge will impact land and access for the Marina. She also wants to know if a piece of the existing bridge will remain for use as a pedestrian walkway.

Response: The new bridge will be further away from the marina. The existing northbound bridge may be retained for pedestrian use, which is part of the City of Hickory’s Riverwalk plan. Any work done to upgrade would be a City of Hickory cost, and the City would own and be responsible for future maintenance.

(2) She wants to know if the speed limit will change. She is concerned about drivers that currently exceed the speed limit and suggested additional police enforcement.

Response: The speed limit will not change north of the Catawba River bridge. The speed limit may be increased from 45 mph to 55 mph for a segment south of the bridge. Enforcement is the responsibility of the local jurisdiction.

3. Barbara Laufer (5231 Peninsula Drive, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Transcript: July 11 Line 658

Comment: Ms. Laufer asked about the criteria that was used to identify noise study areas, what abatement measures may be considered, and if the cost of such abatement is included in the budget.

Response: The NCDOT Traffic Noise Abatement Policy (July 13, 2011) describes the

implementation of the requirements of the FHWA Noise Standard at 23 CFR 772 as they relate to federal and state funded highway construction in North Carolina. Traffic noise abatement for NCDOT highway projects is warranted and must be considered when traffic noise impacts are created by either of the following two conditions: 1) the predicted traffic noise levels for the Design Year (in this case, 2040) approach (reach one decibel less than) or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) contained in 23 CFR 772 or 2) the predicted traffic noise levels for the Design Year substantially exceed existing noise levels as defined in Table 2 of the NCDOT noise policy (shown below). The following noise abatement measures may be considered for incorporation into a project to reduce traffic noise impacts: construction of noise barriers, traffic management measures, alteration of horizontal and vertical alignments, establishment of buffer zones, and noise insulation of Activity Category D land use facilities listed in Table 1 of the NCDOT noise policy. The cost of noise abatement measures is included in the project budget.

Table 2	
Substantial Noise Level Increase	
Hourly Equivalent A-Weighted Sound Level (decibels (dB(A)))	
Existing Noise Level ¹ (Leq(h))	Predicted Design Year Noise Level Increase ² (Leq(h))
50 or less	15 or more
51	14 or more
52	13 or more
53	12 or more
54	11 or more
55 or more	10 or more

¹ Loudest hourly equivalent noise level from the combination of natural and mechanical sources and human activity usually present in a particular area.

² Predicted hourly equivalent Design Year traffic noise level minus existing noise level.

4. Jim Thompson (6664 Lakeshore Drive, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 714 and July 11 Line 904

Comment: Mr. Thompson had multiple questions.

(1) He wants to know if all traffic signals will be removed. He feels signals would be more appropriate in locations with a high percentage of left-turning traffic.

Response: Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

(2) He asked for the basis for the increase in traffic is for the projected year 2035. He also wants to know what the percentage of increase in traffic is projected to be for year 2035.

Response: The traffic forecast is based on current traffic volumes, historic traffic growth rates, and anticipated residential and employment growth based on input from local jurisdictions. The projected percentage of increase in traffic between 2011 and 2040 ranges along the corridor; it is anticipated to be approximately 26% on the north end of the project near Southwest Boulevard, and 45% on the south end of the project near US 70.

5. Mark Stitt (address was not provided; owns business on US 321)

Transcript: July 11 Line 748

Comment: Mr. Stitt wants to know how tractor trailers that access businesses along US 321 will operate with the U-turns and if the new traffic pattern will be an inconvenience.

Response: The new route will require tractor trailers to make a U-turn at many locations, but all of the intersections, U-turn bulbs, left-overs, etc. have all been designed to provide enough pavement width to accommodate tractor trailers. Some movements are rerouted for safety and efficiency.

6. Vicki Holder (4866 Sage Meadow Circle, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 773

Comment: Ms. Holder's house is located close to US 321 and she said it is already very noisy with four lanes of traffic. She wants to know what has happened to property values in small neighborhoods in NC that have had an increase in noise level without noise abatement that have been located near similar projects.

Response: Many factors affect property value, both positively and negatively.

7. Jerry Richardson (8 Mockingbird Lane, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Transcript: July 11 Line 855

Comment: Mr. Richardson is concerned about a superstreet design at Falls Avenue, particularly for tractor trailers from MDI. He asked if Falls Avenue will be lowered or if US 321 will be raised for the superstreet alternative.

Response: The Falls Avenue superstreet alternative, which is an at-grade design, would lower Falls Avenue to the grade of US 321.

8. Carol Frye (929 17th Street, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 877

Comment: Ms. Frye said the proposed plan is going to take her and her husband's home. She wants to know, once a Right-of-Way agent comes to them with a proposal, how long they will have to relocate.

Response: A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner to look at the plans, discuss

anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process. An appraisal will be prepared after this initial contact. Once the appraisal has been completed, the Right-of-Way Agent will make an initial written offer for the property. At that time, negotiations can begin. Once a settlement has been reached and the owner has received the settlement check, they have 90 days to relocate.

9. John Pierce (6202 Galaxy Place, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Transcript: July 11 Line 963

Comment: Mr. Pierce wants to know how close NCDOT's project estimates have been to the actual costs for projects in the past.

Response: Estimates become more precise as the project development process occurs. At the time of letting, if project bids are greater than 10% of the engineer's estimate, NCDOT rejects the bids.

10. Sean Evans (5192 Northview Drive, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 985

Comment: Mr. Evans wants to know if the public has the ability to provide additional comments as the project develops or changes. He also wants to know if the comments of people who are directly impacted by the project have greater value than other citizens' comments. He wants to know how the public can follow up on their comments.

Response: The public has the right to provide comments on the project up until the project is completed. All comments carry the same weight and are treated the same. During the post-hearing meeting, NCDOT will respond to all comments received verbally or in writing from the public hearings and during the following comment period. A copy of the post-hearing meeting minutes can be emailed or mailed to you once completed. To request a copy of the post-hearing meeting minutes, contact Diane Wilson.

11. Frank Wuest (816 US 321, Hickory, NC 28601)

Transcript: July 11 Line 1045

Comment: Frank Wuest had multiple comments/questions.

(1) He feels like the NCDOT is going to make decisions following the public hearing, and wants to know how the public can stay informed on the project as it progresses and changes are potentially made.

Response: For a copy of the comments and responses, contact Diane Wilson. The project website (www.ncdot.gov/projects/us321widening) will be updated as new information becomes available. You can also contact the Project Manager, Gene Tarascio, with any questions that you may have.

(2) He wants to know what the confidence level is that the maps shown at the public hearing are close to what is actually constructed. He also wants to know if any other options will be considered for the interchange on Clement Boulevard.

Response: The maps shown at the public hearing were preliminary maps, approximately 25% complete. The design may be further refined based on new information gathered during the final design process (such as updated traffic counts), and based on comments from the public and discussions with property owners during the right of way acquisition process.

Multiple options were considered for the interchange at Clement Boulevard during preliminary design. If there is new information or input from the public that prompts NCODT to look at a different design, then additional alternative designs will be considered.

12. Shawn Beichler, Merchants Distributors, LLC (MDI) (120 4th Street SW, Hickory, NC 28602)

Transcript: July 12 Line 372

Comment: MDI has approximately 3,200 tractor trailers entering and existing the US 321 and Alex Lee Boulevard intersection weekly from the MDI distribution warehouse. Mr. Beichler said a large majority of the tractor trailer traffic makes a left turn onto US 321, which will no longer be permitted directly with the proposed design. MDI's biggest concerns are the stacking of the tractor trailers trying to make U-turns and the difficulty for tractor trailers to make the turn. MDI would like left turns to be allowed at the Alex Lee Boulevard/US 321 intersection.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. Sidestreet left-turns have been redirected for safety and efficiency. Additional coordination with MDI will occur.

13. John Dybus (204 Woodmere Point, Granite Falls, 28630)

Transcript: July 12 Line 433

Comment: Mr. Dybus is concerned about the tractor trailers from MDI and Walmart that will have to make a U-turn. He thinks left turns are necessary where there are large amounts of tractor trailer traffic.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes.

14. Audience Member (representing Emergency Services)

Transcript: July 12 Line 445

Comment: This audience member said that any improvement on US 321 will be helpful. However, he was concerned about the impact of a superstreet design on emergency services. He asked that at major access roads that do not have a left turn from US 321, that the design accommodate emergency vehicles crossing the median. Bridges are preferred where feasible, such as at Falls Avenue.

Response: In the numerous superstreets constructed in the state, there have not been reported delays in emergency response. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate large emergency vehicles. The median will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles to cross over if warranted. Some traffic signals are anticipated along the

project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

15. Steven Heffner (No address provided; lives in Lakeview Park neighborhood)

Transcript: July 12 Line 507

Comment: Mr. Heffner is concerned that Caldwell County police, emergency services, and fire department cannot turn left into his development and will have to cross the entire bridge into Hickory to make a U-turn and then come back. He said they are the only development cut off from Caldwell County services. He said not all emergency vehicles can drive over medians, so he thinks there should be a left-over for emergency service vehicles.

Response: In the numerous superstreets constructed in the state, there have not been reported delays in emergency response. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate large emergency vehicles. The median will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles to cross over if warranted.

16. Audience Member

Transcript: July 12 Line 524

Comment: Has NCDOT studied the overall safety of the superstreet design? Did NCDOT consider using the jughandle design rather than the U-turn design for this project? Is the traffic report available to the public?

Response: Several studies have shown the safety benefits of superstreet design. A jughandle design typically requires more right-of-way, specifically at the intersection, without offering improved traffic operations compared to the superstreet U-turn. As a result, NCDOT did not specifically consider a jughandle design for this corridor. With the U-turn design, drivers have to look only at one direction of traffic. With the jughandle design, drivers have to cross both directions of traffic. Based on the project's traffic analysis, NCDOT anticipates that the proposed design will accommodate traffic volumes and queuing through the design year of 2040. The superstreet design results in less queuing and delay than a traditional intersection corridor. The traffic report is available upon request.

17. Audience Member

Transcript: July 12 Line 583

Comment: Is there a timeframe proposed for Sections B and C?

Response: There is not a timeframe for Sections B and C, except for the US 321/Mount Herman Road intersection, which is scheduled to begin right of way acquisition in fiscal year 2018 and construction in fiscal year 2020.

18. Donnie Potter, Caldwell County Commissioner

Transcript: July 12 Line 588

Comment: Mr. Potter wants NCDOT to look for an option that does not require emergency

response vehicles to drive over the median. Although they are able to do so, it wears out the vehicles, which are paid for by local funds. He asked if there are any other superstreets in North Carolina.

Response: The median will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles to cross over if warranted. Many of the existing intersections will have left turn lanes from US 321 onto the connecting road. Some other superstreets are located on NC 16 in Lincoln County, NC 55 between Holly Springs and Fuquay-Varina, and US 401 around Rolesville.

19. Renee Winkler (No address provided)

Transcript: July 12 Line 680

Comment: Ms. Winkler is concerned that the level of service (LOS) is only going to be improved one grade to a D. She thinks at least a LOS of C, which is stable flow, should be the goal. She is concerned because most of her neighbor's travel (medical, shopping, etc.) requires turning left toward Hickory. She also noted that traffic signals create platoons that result in gaps in traffic, and without those gaps it will be difficult to merge into the traffic flow.

Response: The road is being designed to operate at an LOS D in 2040. LOS D is the level of service threshold commonly considered to be acceptable by NCDOT and FHWA. Today, the majority of US 321 and the intersections along the corridor operate at a LOS E. Without improvements, 12 of 13 segments along the mainline and 16 of 18 intersections are projected to operate at a LOS F by the year 2035. With improvements, the corridor and intersections are projected to operate at a LOS B or C immediately, and a LOS D by the design year of 2040. Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

20. Doug Nichols (No address provided; lives on Grace Chapel Road)

Transcript: July 12 Line 711

Comment: Mr. Nichols is concerned that traffic (including trucks from MDI) currently using Alex Lee Boulevard will not be able to turn left onto US 321. He thinks many drivers will access US 321 via Grace Chapel Road, using New Farm Road (a very small and windy road). He is also concerned about zoning and new development along the widened US 321 corridor, because he feels it will add even more traffic.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. Large trucks are restricted from using New Farm Road. The traffic forecast is based on current traffic volumes, historic traffic growth rates, and anticipated residential and employment growth based on input from local jurisdictions.

21. Audience Member

Transcript: July 12 Line 730

Comment: The audience member asked about common levels of service on other area roads, and if LOS D was acceptable.

Response: The road is being designed to operate at an LOS D in 2040. LOS D is the level of service threshold commonly considered to be acceptable by NCDOT and FHWA. Levels of service vary on other area roads.

22. Mary Morrow (No address was provided)

Transcript: July 12 Line 748

Comment: Ms. Morrow noted that at the existing U-turn near Fairwood Drive you cannot see the “Do Not Enter” sign when driving in a small car.

Response: NCDOT will look into the placement of this sign.

23. Audience Member

Transcript: July 12 Line 763

Comment: The audience member asked several questions about the design, which the moderator answered during the hearing. These include: (1) What is the current median width along US 321? (2) What does Section CA mean? (3) What is the role of the right-of-way agent?

Response: The current median is typically about 30 feet wide. Section CA refers to the intersection of US 321 and Mount Herman Road, which is a subset of Section C. The role of the right-of-way agent is to provide information to property owners regarding NCDOT’s right of way acquisition process, and to negotiate with the property owner during the right of way acquisition process.

24. Kenny Whiteside (No address was provided)

Transcript: July 12 Line 867

Comment: Mr. Whiteside is concerned that without traffic signals, there will not be gaps in the traffic for drivers to use, and that safety will not be improved. He suggested a design that includes more interchanges/overpasses.

Response: Interchanges/overpasses are more impactful than U-turn bulbs, and are not warranted in most locations. Based on the project’s traffic analysis, NCDOT anticipates that the proposed design will accommodate traffic volumes and queuing through the design year of 2040. Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

25. Audience Member

Transcript: July 12 Line 905

Comment: What is the duration for construction? Why are only parts of the project funded?

Response: Generally, for a project of this length, construction is anticipated to take two to three years (for Section A). Until final plans are finished and a contractor is selected, NCDOT will not have a detailed estimate. The intent is for US 321 to remain open to traffic during construction. Projects are funded based on prioritization through the NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Process,

sometimes referred as the SPOT (Strategic Planning Office of Transportation) process. Some sections ranked higher because of specific needs, or because of the cost/benefit ratio.

**B. WRITTEN CITIZEN COMMENTS AND
NCDOT RESPONSES**

An asterisk (*) by “Response” indicates a direct response to the comment is required.

**B.1. Comments That Require
Additional Information**

The following citizens provided written comments that required additional information. Responses are provided for each comment or question.

Comment

26. Eugene and Betty Chase (5358 Beacon Ridge Drive, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Mr. and Ms. Chase had multiple comments/questions.

(1) They feel there has been very little communication from NCDOT to most of the residents of Caldwell County who would be affected by the project. They did not learn about the project from NCDOT. They want to know why were the meetings were scheduled for the summer when so many people are vacation and with very little warning.

Response: NCDOT mailed a newsletter to over 2,800 residents along the project corridor about the project and the public hearing approximately two weeks before the hearing was held. For residents who do not own property along the corridor, information on the public hearing was also published in the local newspapers beginning on June 19, 2016 and advertised via radio beginning on July 6, 2016. Anyone who was in attendance to the public meeting will be included on future mailings. The project website (www.ncdot.gov/projects/us321widening) will be updated with information on the project as it becomes available, including location and date of future meetings. The public hearing took place this summer based on the overall project planning schedule.

(2) They feel this project has not been thought out or tested significantly for traffic patterns in Granite Falls. They would like to know if a traffic survey has been done on Falls Avenue. They feel a bridge at Falls Avenue is needed because they believe not having a bridge would severely limit the Granite Falls Fire Co. and Rescue Squads, cause backups on US 321 at the Pinewood traffic signal to as far as the Walmart shopping center during rush hour, and cause backups on Pinewood Road past the Granite Falls Recreation Center. They want to make sure an in-depth study of all the variables is done before this project is done.

Response: Based on the project’s traffic analysis, NCDOT anticipates that the proposed design will accommodate traffic volumes and queuing through the design year of 2040. The superstreet design results in less queuing and delay than a traditional intersection corridor. In the numerous superstreets constructed in the state, there have not been reported delays in

emergency response. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate large emergency vehicles. The median will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles to cross over if warranted.

27. John J. Dybus (204 Woodmere Point, Granite Falls, 28630)

Comment: Mr. Dybus is concerned with the superstreet concept, especially the current intersection allowing access to MDI, the sock outlet, and the New Farm Road intersection, where there is a large Walmart Shopping Center. He would like to review the traffic study that defines and supports the benefits proposed by the superstreet.

***Response:** Several studies have shown the safety benefits of superstreet design. A copy of the traffic study will be provided.

28. Bethany Lingle (4870 Pooveys Grove Church Road, Granite Falls, NC)

Comment: Ms. Lingle had multiple comments/questions.

(1) Ms. Lingle is concerned about the large volume of trucks coming out of MDI that will have to make a right turn and U-turn to travel south on US 321. She would like to know how many vehicles the left-over (U-turn) lanes can accommodate and if that number can include a semi-truck.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. Vehicles queue in the turn lanes in the median, not in the U-turn bulb. Each location is a different length and can accommodate a different number of vehicles, depending on the anticipated volume at each location.

(3) She would like the Poovey's Grove Church Road cul-de-sac proposal to be changed to a right turn only.

Response: This road is near other intersections onto US 321, and will be cul-de-sac'd to allow for required spacing between intersections.

29. Shawn Beichler, Merchants Distributors, LLC (MDI) (120 4th Street SW, Hickory, NC 28602)

Comment: Mr. Beichler had multiple comments/questions.

(1) MDI has approximately 3,200 tractor trailers entering and existing the US 321 and Alex Lee Boulevard intersection weekly from the MDI distribution warehouse. A significant majority of the tractor trailer traffic makes a left turn onto US 321, which will no longer be permitted with the proposed design. The proposed design would require these tractor trailers to make a right turn and then a U-turn, which MDI believes is a safety and traffic concern for the public and a time and financial concern for the MDI distribution warehouse. MDI would like the Alex Lee Boulevard/US 321 intersection to allow left turns from Alex Lee Boulevard onto US 321.

Response: The design team believes the superstreet design will safely accommodate the needs of MDI, however we are open to the possibility of other surface street intersection designs should that not be the case in the final design stage. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The driveway and the U-turn bulbs are anticipated to be signalized, which will provide turning movements for trucks and other vehicles. The storage lane for the trucks waiting for the u-turn signal will be designs to provide adequate length to store queued trucks. Traffic signals will be programmed to provide responsive operation for trucks leaving the MDI facility during its night-time peak. The Division Office will continue to work with MDI officials to see that their needs are met in the final design.

(2) MDI has two different parcels that look like one has full controlled access and one has partial controlled access. MDI would like to know if these two parcels are completely cut off from direct access to US 321.

Response: Private driveway connections will not be allowed onto US 321 in areas with full controlled access. In partial controlled access areas, private driveways onto US 321 may be allowed, but limited to one connection per parcel. That one connection is defined as one ingress and one egress point.

(3) MDI wants to know, if the purple on the hearing map represents the new 12th Street Drive, what happens to the old ROW that is not between the MDI parcel and the new purple 12th Street Drive?

Response: The purple on the map is existing utility easement. 12th Street Drive will not be relocated as part of this project. The existing access directly onto US 321 across from 7th Avenue will be removed.

30. Vicki Holder (4866 Sage Meadow Creek, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Ms. Holder prefers Alternative #1, a superstreet, with a signal for the Grace Chapel Road intersection. She also had additional comments/questions.

(1) She would like noise abatement to be considered to limit noise generated by the additional two lanes of traffic.

Response: A noise study has been conducted for the project corridor. The red hatched areas on the hearing maps are the areas that have been highlighted for further study. A final noise analysis will be done for the entire corridor prior to final design.

(2) She would like to know how property values are affected when neighborhoods are near higher traffic/noisy highways.

Response: Many factors affect property value, both positively and negatively.

31. Daniel Duncan (95 Archer Street, Granite Falls)

Comment: Mr. Duncan is concerned about the noise and value of his property. There are two houses next to his house that are being taken for construction. He is concerned the dust/debris

will affect the quality of life of his family. He wants to know what options there are for purchasing his house. He thinks the purchase of his house would allow the ending angle for Archer Street to be less harsh.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final. A preliminary review of this request does not indicate a change will be made. The contractor will follow standard procedures to minimize creating dust and debris during construction.

32. Ben Belton (benbelton@hotmail.com)

Comment: Mr. Belton wants to know if the U-turns movements will have traffic signals. Mr. Belton is concerned about the intersection of US 321 and Mt. Herman Road in Caldwell County. He said traffic is particularly heavy when Hudson Elementary School and classes at Caldwell Early College let out in the afternoons and he believes a signalized intersection would be much safer.

Response: Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

33. Carness D. Wilson, Jr. (114 Royal Wood Drive, Lenoir, NC 28645)

Comment: Mr. Wilson is concerned there is not enough room to slow down to make the turn from US 321 to Royal Wood Drive due to traffic getting onto the ramp to Southwest Boulevard. He would like NCDOT to look at this issue.

Response: The project team will consider improvements to this intersection to mitigate this potential issue.

34. Carol Frye (929 17th Street NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Ms. Frye said she and her husband are willing to negotiate the impacts to their property.

Response: A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process. An appraisal will be prepared after this initial contact. Once the appraisal has been completed, the Right-of-Way Agent will make an initial written offer for the property. At that time, negotiations can begin.

35. Gary Dean Frye (929 17th Street NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Mr. Frye requested to move the Clement Boulevard 50-foot easement from beside Pizza Hut to the rear of his property. He also requested to start grading at the chain link fence to allow his garage to be retained and a 53-foot trailer to back inside the gate and driveway.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final design. Easements will likely change during final design.

36. David W. Starnes (1021 14th Avenue NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Mr. Starnes wants to move the U-turn bulb at Station 245+00 and the C/A fence south 75 feet, so he can access his driveway at Wesley Place in Granite Falls, NC.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final design. A preliminary review indicates this may be feasible.

37. Don McMullin, Signature Seating, Inc. (1718 9th Avenue NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: The encroachment on parcel 3271 will adversely affect the operation of Mr. McMullin's business. He would like to be contacted to discuss plans during construction and options to help his business continue operations without obstruction.

Response: The area NCDOT anticipates needing to access during construction is at the tie slope for the proposed interchange in the corner of the business parking lot. Full access to your driveway will remain during construction. Please contact the Project Manager, Gene Tarascio via email at gtarascio@ncdot.gov or phone at 919-707-6046 with any additional concerns you have about construction impacting your business.

38. Guy M. Long III (building on LV4, LLC property in Granite Falls/Hudson area)

Comment: Mr. Long had multiple comments/questions.

(1) If his building is partly in the utility easement area, he wants to know if that means NCDOT will likely buy it.

Response: If a building is partly within the utility easement, there is the possibility that it would be purchased or need a temporary easement. During final design, the design will be refined and temporary impact easements may change. There is no schedule for buying right-of-way or starting construction, however, because there are currently no funds for this section of the project (Section B).

(2) He has another property in the Hickory area under Guy Max Long II and it is in the noise study area. He would like to know what this means.

Response: Being in the noise study area means that this property might be eligible for traffic noise abatement. A noise study has been conducted for the project corridor. The red hatched areas on the hearing maps are the areas that have been highlighted for further study. A final noise analysis will be done for the entire corridor prior to final design.

39. Jack Temple III, Tailored Chemical Products, Inc. (700 12th Street Dr. NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Tailored Chemical Products, Inc. has a lot of inbound/outbound trucks that enter/exit off of US 321 via the 7th Avenue NW intersection. Their facility is beside of Performance Food Group that also has a lot (several hundred a day) of truck traffic. They are

concerned where the truck traffic will enter/exit after the new road design/widening occurs. They feel that the existing intersection is not safe.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. This area will be reevaluated to determine if an intersection can be retained at the existing location.

40. Mark Seaman, Hickory Crawdads (2500 Clement Blvd NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: There are more than 70 home games and outside events between April 1 and Labor Day every year. Mr. Seaman would like to know how traffic be effected for fans trying to reach the stadium (LPFRANS) for games.

Response: Two lanes of traffic in each direction will remain open during construction. Specific access to the stadium will be considered in more detail during final design. NCDOT will coordinate with the stadium staff prior to construction.

41. Matt Maulding, Peak Motors (peakmotorsinc@yahoo.com)

Comment: Mr. Maulding would like to know when Peak Motors will get compensated for their property and business, assuming right-of-way is acquired in FY 2018. They also want to know when they will have to completely vacate the property and cease doing any more business.

Response: A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process. An appraisal will be prepared after this initial contact. Once the appraisal has been completed, the Right-of-Way Agent will make an initial written offer for the property. At that time, negotiations can begin. Once a settlement has been reached and the owner has received the settlement check, they have 90 days to relocate.

42. Mike Brady (5052 Lake Valley Place, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Mr. Brady lives in a valley and has a creek on his property that, during bad weather, fills up quite high (see attached photographs). He said that most of the water is runoff from US 321. He is concerned that this project will make the creek even more susceptible to flooding due to more runoff water. His home is directly beside the creek. He has lived there since 1988 and has never seen the creek out of its banks or had any flooding issues with his home, but he feels it would not take much more water to do so. There are three other homes nearby that would also be in question due to more runoff from US 321.

Response: The additional information will be reviewed during the hydraulic design of the project.

43. Mike Brown, AllState Agency (907 US 321 NW, Hickory, NC)

Comment: If Mr. Brown is forced to relocate, AllState's corporate office has to conduct costly demographic and traffic studies and approve a new location before he can move. As a result, he said the unreimbursed cost of moving could potentially force him to close.

Response: This impact will be considered during the right of way acquisition and final design process. A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process. An appraisal will be prepared after this initial contact. Once the appraisal has been completed, the Right-of-Way Agent will make an initial written offer for the property. At that time, negotiations can begin. Once a settlement has been reached and the owner has received the settlement check, they have 90 days to relocate.

44. Sharon Grindstaff, SunLife Sunrooms Spas & More (5035 Hickory Boulevard, Hickory, NC)

Comment: Ms. Grindstaff wants to know how the proposed setback will affect their parking and if they will be able to use their existing parking lot.

Response: The proposed permanent right of way impact area is approximately at the edge of the parking lot, although a small section of temporary easement as currently shown encroaches into the first row of parking. Temporary easements may change during final design. A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner following final designs to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process.

45. Steve and Connie Minton (410 Thompson Drive, Hudson, NC 28638)

Comment: Mr. and Ms. Minton wish traffic signals would be reconsidered. Four major schools are impacted between Mission Road and Mt. Herman Road. They would like to know how many vehicles (cars and buses) the U-turn bulb will hold. They are concerned about tractor trailers from MDI, both Walmarts, and Food Lion along the corridor.

Response: Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers and buses. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. Vehicles queue in the turn lanes in the median, not in the U-turn bulb. Each location is a different length and can accommodate a different number of vehicles, depending on the anticipated volume at each location.

46. William Hutson (210 13th Street SW)

Comment: Mr. Hutson, who has a business located at this address (the property is currently listed on the plan as Charles Thomas Jr.'s property), had multiple comments/questions.

(1) He would like to know if the rear part of his building (left rear facing) is to be removed. He would like to know if the rear parking area is to be removed. He would like to know if he will have access to the front parking lot.

Response: The rear part of the building is inside the limits of construction and inside of the temporary construction easement. Part of the rear parking is within the limits of construction and will be part of the cut slope needed to widen US 321. The majority of the parking is within the temporary construction easement but the property in the easement will be reverted to the

property owner once the project is complete. The current design, approximately 25% completed, has not yet been refined to consider individual property impacts due to temporary easements and driveway connections. During final design, the project team will look at these details. The access on 13th Street SW will be controlled for the majority of the parking lot which means there will not be access from the parking lot to 13th Street SW in this area. Access from 2nd Avenue SW will remain the same.

(2) He is concerned about the height of the new bridge compared to the existing height of the US 321 bridge over Catawba River. He would like to know if the current road level of US 321 will be raised or lowered.

Response: Based on the preliminary design the new bridge will be 23 feet above the existing US 321 (measured from the US 321 roadway to the riding surface on the bridge). The preliminary design for US 321 includes only resurfacing along this section of US 321. So, US 321 will remain at approximately the same level it is currently.

(3) He would like to know if 13th Street, which is in front of his store, will be divided. He would like to know if the new ramp that carries vehicles to 13th Street will allow for left turns, or just right turns and if there are plans for a signal at the end of the ramp. He would like to know if 14th Street is planned to become a dead end prior to the 2nd Avenue intersection. He would like information on studies that have been done that show that a U-turn is safer than traffic signals or other alternatives. He would like clarification on if there will be a traffic signal at the 2nd Avenue NW intersection or only a left turn when you can across three lanes of traffic.

Response: The preliminary design for 13th Street SW includes a painted island in the median in front of the business. There is not a raised island in the median in this area. 14th Street will become a dead end prior to the 2nd Avenue intersection. Several studies have shown the safety benefits of superstreet design. A new study on signalized superstreets safety benefits is currently underway and is expected to be published by late 2016. Typically, dual left turns or dual right turns are signalized. The need for signals will be determined at a later date during final design.

(4) He would like clarification on how customers will be able to access the businesses along US 321, or if the NCDOT plans on relocating, buying, or closing all the businesses for which access will be cut.

Response: If access is restricted permanently, NCDOT will either provide a new access point into the property or will purchase the property. Access will be retained to businesses during construction.

47. James R. Mitchell (200 1st Avenue NW, Suite 507, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Mr. Mitchell had multiple comments/questions.

(1) He requested a driveway for the business at 66 US 321 NW.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final design to determine if it is feasible to reestablish a driveway onto US 321.

(2) He stated he will be damaged by the closing of Main Avenue NW. He feels the U-turn north of the railroad underpass is dangerous due to poor site distance. He also feels truck traffic on 14th Street will increase.

Response: A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process.

48. Juliet Good (juliet@goodinsurancenc.com)

Comment: Ms. Good is a tenant of property on 15 US 321 SW, Hickory, NC 28602, which is owned by William Graham. She rents the space for her business, Juliet Good State Farm. She would like to know if she would be eligible for moving expenses as a tenant. She would also like to know when she would have to move, as she is part of project section A.

Response: Tenants are eligible for moving expenses. More information is at the following link – https://www.ncdot.gov/download/construction/roadbuilt/relocationbooklet_07.pdf or by contacting the NCDOT Division Right of Way office. Right of way acquisition is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2018, which begins in October 2017. It is unknown when each property will be contacted specifically, but the right of way acquisition process is anticipated to take approximately three years for Section A.

49. Dr. James Robinette (1850 Clement Boulevard NW, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Dr. Robinette does not like the clover leaf design near Clement Boulevard because it impacts the driveways to his business. If he cannot have access to Clement Boulevard NW, then he would like NCDOT to buy his property.

Response: Access to Clement Boulevard NW will be lost with the proposed design. NCDOT will attempt to maintain at least one driveway for each property.

50. Sean M. and Kimberly F. Evans (5192 Northview Drive, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Mr. and Ms. Evans had multiple concerns/questions.

(1) They want to know what the thick black line is that is shown on Parcel 3174 on the Grace Chapel Road Alternative #1, superstreet, map.

Response: The line of concern on the map is a Control of Access line, which means driveway access will not be allowed in that location.

(2) They have safety concerns about the slope adjacent to their driveway and the end of Northview Drive. The neighborhood pump house is located at the end of the road. They propose a retaining wall at the back of the roadway berm instead of tie slopes in this area.

Response: The angled line on this property is the control of access boundary. The slope will be approximately parallel with US 321.

51. Anne Seitz (P.O. Box 335, 20 Montclair Avenue, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Ms. Seitz wants to make sure truck traffic out of MDI is taken into account during design. She feels that making trucks cross three lanes of traffic and make a U-turn will not be safer and will back up traffic. She requested first responders be consulted so that their concerns are understood.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. In the numerous superstreets constructed in the state, there have not been reported delays in emergency response. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate large emergency vehicles. Emergency response personnel attended a Local Officials' Informational Meeting held the same day as the public hearing, and provided their input on the project at that time.

52. Karen Dybus (204 Woodmere Point, Granite Falls, 28630)

Comment: Ms. Dybus is concerned the right turn to U-turn coming from New Farm Road will back up enormously on US 321, because of the large amounts of traffic, which include large trucks, coming from Walmart. She said there will be more traffic with the construction of UNC Health Care and Crystal IT on New Farm Road.

Response: Based on the project's traffic analysis, NCDOT anticipates that the proposed design will accommodate traffic volumes and queuing through the design year of 2040. The superstreet design results in less queuing and delay than a traditional intersection corridor. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes.

53. Jonathan Greer (126 Deer Ridge Drive, Hudson, NC 28638)

Comment: Mr. Greer requested to add a U-turn bulb near Station 575+00, which is located near an existing U-turn.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final design. Changes or additions to U-turn bulbs will be considered.

54. Walter Spicer (623 Providence Court, Hudson, NC 28638)

Comment: Mr. Spicer requested to add a U-turn bulb near Station 575+00.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final design. Changes or additions to U-turn bulbs will be considered.

55. Donald Monts (5184 Corbin Lane, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: The proposed design shows Corbin Lane being extended to Lake Hickory Marina, which Mr. Monts believes will increase traffic on the road specifically in the spring/summer months. He feels the existing road is narrow and is not safe. However, if the road is widened, it

will encroach on the Condo units.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location during final design. The width was designed to accommodate a vehicle pulling a boat trailer.

56. Julie Hall (juliedhall0113@gmail.com)

(1) Ms. Hall likes that the Highland Avenue/Lower Cedar Valley Road/US 321 intersection is closed with the proposed design, because she thinks it is a very dangerous intersection. She is concerned about the right in/right out design at the Mission Road/Lower Cedar Valley Road/US 321 intersection, because schools buses will be forced to make several U-turns in both the northbound and southbound directions and this area is very close to the high school.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers and school buses. The traffic analysis took into account projected large vehicle volumes. Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

(2) She is also concerned the location of the U-turn used by drivers headed south from Quarry Estates Road is too close to the Quarry Estates Road/US 321 intersection. She feels it will be very difficult for a passenger car and, even more so, school buses to cross three lanes of traffic to get to the U-turn in the distance proposed, especially if there is no stop light at the Mission Road/Lower Cedar Valley Road/US 321 intersection to provide breaks in traffic. She said, if the Quarry Estate Road/US 321 intersection is the only access for the Meadowcreek Development, a very high number of cars needing to travel southbound to the high school, jobs, and/or shopping in Hickory will be at the intersection and required to cross three lanes of traffic and make a U-turn.

Response: Drivers from Quarry Estates Road could choose to use a U-turn bulb further from Quarry Estates Road, especially during peak periods when traffic volumes are higher. Another U-turn bulb may be added east of the bulb at Quarry Estates Road.

57. Greg Wilson, Granite Falls Town Planner

Comment: Mr. Wilson had multiple concerns/questions.

(1) A new business is proposed to be built near Glen Ridge Drive (-Y24-) that wants to have direct access to US 321 southbound. They will be requesting a new left-over at or north of Glen Ridge Drive.

Response: The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. The project team will revisit the design in this location. Based on a preliminary review, it is likely that a left-over from US 321 onto Glen Ridge Drive will be feasible. Vehicles turning left from Glen Ridge Drive onto US 321 will first turn right, then use the nearest U-turn bulb. The property is also accessed from US 321A via Glen Ridge Drive; left turns from US 321 will be allowed onto US 321A.

(2) Mr. Wilson is concerned about the section of US 321 between US 321A/River Bend Drive and Woodlane Street. He said this section currently offers three crossover/U-turn opportunities that many existing businesses currently rely on, including the Lovelady Rescue Squad. The proposed design shows this section being reduced to zero crossover/U-turn opportunities for that same stretch. He is concerned the reduced access will reduce the desirability of the adjacent properties for development or occupancy. He expects an increase in traffic volumes on side streets. Additional crossover/U-turn opportunities are requested to be included in the section of US 321 between US 321A/River Bend Drive and Woodlane Street to provide better access to businesses along the corridor.

He provided the list below of other business in this section of the project corridor that have unique traffic characteristics.

- Captains Galley Seafood Restaurant is one of the most popular eateries in the entire County.
- Falls Medical Park is currently planning an expansion/remodel.
- Krystal Engineering is a new industry getting started that anticipates providing up to 80 new jobs in Granite Falls and will have truck traffic.
- A new industry involving vertical farming/hydroponics is getting started on 80 acres. The industry will produce truck traffic that will primarily carry shipping containers.
- Lovelady Rescue Squad serves southern Caldwell County.
- A-1 Scrapyard is a metal processing and recycling facility that produces truck traffic and serves heavily loaded customer vehicles/trailers.
- Dr. Glander's Veterinary Clinic.
- Lamar Sign Company produces large bucket truck and tractor trailer traffic.
- Frito Lay Distribution Center produces a high volume truck traffic.
- C CON Metals USA produces truck traffic.
- Several furniture showrooms and other businesses.

Response: The current design, approximately 25% completed, has not yet been refined to consider individual property impacts due to temporary easements and driveway connections. During final design, the project team will look at these details. Changes or additions to U-turn bulbs will be considered.

58. J. Douglas Wilkins, Colonial Development Company, LLC (P.O. Box 3025, Hickory, NC 28603)

Comment: Colonial Development Company has substantial capital investment in parcels 3273 (CVS/pharmacy), 3276 (Social Security Administration), and 3275 (Taco Bell) which will be impacted by the proposed design of the US 321 and Clement Boulevard interchange. Information on current leases and history on the site was provided. The properties were developed via a master plan that allowed ready access to the surrounding roadways and cross access. The proposed interchange design eliminates three of four points of access to the property. The one remaining access is a right in/right out onto US 321 and requires drivers to cross a deceleration lane for northbound traffic that is attempting to exist onto Clement Boulevard, which they feel is not safe. While the proposed plan only shows a full taking of parcel 3273, they said the design essentially will result in a full taking of all three parcels. They said proposed plan appears to eliminate access to the adjacent parcel 3276, which is not theirs,

from both US 321 and 9th Avenue NW.

Response: The current design, approximately 25% completed, has not yet been refined to consider individual property impacts due to temporary easements and driveway connections. During final design, the project team will look at these details. For impacted properties, a Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process.

59. Lois Williams, The Rosemyr Corp. (903 US 321, Hickory)

Comment: The proposed design shows taking all of The Rosemyr Corp. property, which is a commercial office building. Ms. Williams said tenants are already considering moving because they know they can't be there long term and this information has to be disclosed to any new proposed tenants, which limits the ability to lease space now. She said this project will devastate her property leading up to any taking.

Response: A Right-of-Way Agent will contact the property owner after final designs to look at the plans, discuss anticipated effects, and explain the property owner's rights during this process. Tenants are eligible for moving expenses under the NCDOT Relocation Assistance policy. NCDOT's Advanced Acquisition Process addresses concerns about the schedule of right of way acquisition.

60. Pam Taylor (6733 Lakeview Terrace, Hickory)

Comment: Ms. Taylor asked if this project will affect her property. She is also concerned that if any of the land between her driveway and the cliff is removed, it will be dangerous to live so close to the edge.

Response: This project will not affect her property. There will be some changes to the topography along the cliff between her house and US 321, a combination of cut and fill. The final design will be based on more detailed surveys, which may result in a change to the cut and fill limits.

61. Jeff Carr, Exclusive Honda Power Sports (property listed as "diamondhead" near Glenn Ridge Drive)

Comment: Mr. Carr provided information on a planned development in the Town of Granite Falls. He is concerned about losing full movement access at the US 321/Glen Ridge Drive intersection. He also is concerned about motorcyclists having to use the U-turn bulbs.

Response: The project team will revisit the design in this location. Based on a preliminary review, it is likely that a left-over from US 321 onto Glen Ridge Drive will be feasible. Vehicles turning left from Glen Ridge Drive onto US 321 will first turn right, then use the nearest U-turn bulb. The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers. The traffic analysis took into account projected truck volumes. Several studies have shown the safety benefits of superstreet design for all vehicle types.

B.2. Comments Related to Falls Avenue

The following citizens provided written comments but did not request additional information.

The response to these comments is that the selection of the preferred design will take into account effects on natural resources, community facilities such as schools and churches, neighborhoods, businesses, and vehicle access due to construction impacts, long-term direct impacts, changes in traffic and access, and other indirect and cumulative factors. It also will depend on State and Federal agency input, public input, and cost.

The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers, buses, and other large vehicles. The traffic analysis took into account projected large vehicle volumes. Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

Opposed to Superstreet

62. Becky Harris (185 Greens Road, Granite Falls, NC)

Comment: Mrs. Harris is very excited about the widening of US 321 and believes it is greatly needed. She has concerns about the proposal of the Falls Avenue interchange in Granite Falls. It is her understanding the current "preferred" option for Falls Avenue is to demolish and not replace the Falls Avenue bridge, replacing it with a superstreet intersection.

She is not in favor of this option for the following reasons. There are too many residential houses on the NE side of US 321 that would lose access to the SW side of Granite Falls. The Falls Avenue bridge is needed to access the elementary school, middle school, post office, police, and fire station along with downtown Granite Falls businesses and churches. She, along with other parents, feel it is not safe for their children's school busses to have to cross traffic and make a U-turn to get to the schools.

63. Dino Bidernardi

Comment: Mr. Bidernardi is concerned about emergency response times and access to the eastern side of US 321 from the western side of US 321 with the potential absence of bridges/intersections. He feels that a bridge at Falls Avenue will decrease the impact.

64. John Douglas (johndouglas06@gmail.com)

Comment: Mr. Douglas is concerned about the potential plan to replace the interchange with a superstreet. He feels that increasing U-turn traffic on a highway with growing volume does not increase safety based on his observation of other existing superstreets. He thinks the turn lanes for the U-turns will become full due to the inability to find a break in oncoming traffic, which will cause traffic to back up on the high speed through lanes.

Support Partial Clover Interchange

65. Julie Hall (juliedhall0113@gmail.com)

Comment: Ms. Hall prefers Alternative #2, a partial clover interchange, for the Falls Avenue intersection.

Support Tight Diamond Interchange

66. Eric Koch (5476 Bridgewater Drive, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Mr. Koch prefers Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange, for the Falls Avenue intersection. His second choice is Alternative #2, a partial clover interchange. As a board of directors member of the Anchors Landing community on the east side of Granite Falls, Mr. Koch is concerned about future access to EMS services, the Post Office, and general access to downtown Granite Falls and Hickory. He is not in favor of removing the Falls Avenue bridge nor the superstreet concept.

67. Roberta Brenman (4988 Harbor View Drive W., Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Ms. Brenman prefers Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange, for the Falls Avenue intersection because it takes less people's homes. Her second choice is Alternative #2, a partial clover interchange. She is concerned about the residents east of Granite Falls losing direct access to the town with Alternative #1, a superstreet. She feels keeping the bridge at Falls Avenue is important. She feels the Falls Avenue entry south towards Hickory needs more approach area because the hill makes it hard to see traffic coming from the north.

68. Kassa Hart (219 Taylor Circle Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange, is the preferred for the Falls Avenue intersection.

69. Stephen Fee (5648 Anchor Drive, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Mr. Fee prefers Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange, for the Fall Avenue intersection. He feels it will keep Granite Falls connected as a community and be safer than an at-grade solution.

70. Anne Seitz (P.O. Box 335, 20 Montclair Avenue, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Ms. Seitz prefers Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange, for the Falls Avenue intersection.

71. John Douglas (johndouglas06@gmail.com)

Comment: Mr. Douglas prefers Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange, for the Falls Avenue intersection, because he feels it will provide a safe entrance to and exit from US 321,

continue to provide access to merchants in Granite Falls for individuals east of US 321, and eliminate the need for a dedicated pedestrian bridge.

Town Recommendation

72. Town of Granite Falls

Comment: At the regular Town Council meeting held on Monday, July 18, 2016, the Town Council unanimously approved a Resolution in support of NCDOT Project U-4700B, Alternative Design #3 - Tight Diamond Interchange, for the intersection of Falls Avenue and US 321.

B.3. Comments Related to Grace Chapel Road

The following citizens provided written comments but did not request additional information. The response to these comments is that the selection of the preferred design will take into account effects on natural resources, community facilities such as schools and churches, neighborhoods, businesses, and vehicle access due to construction impacts, long-term direct impacts, changes in traffic and access, and other indirect and cumulative factors. It also will depend on State and Federal agency input, public input, and costs.

The U-turn bulbs and left-overs have been designed to accommodate tractor trailers, buses, and other large vehicles. The traffic analysis took into account projected large vehicle volumes. Some traffic signals are anticipated along the project corridor at both left-over and U-turn locations. The installation of signals, where warranted, will be determined based on an updated traffic study completed prior to construction.

Support Superstreet

73. Ed Bujold, MD (54 Peaceful Cove Court, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Mr. Bujold prefers Alternative #1, a superstreet, with a signal for the Grace Chapel Road intersection, because it preserves properties on and provides access to the service drive, including his medical office building and would be the cheapest option. His second choice is Alternative #2, a partial clover interchange, since it provides access to the service drive. His third choice is Alternative #3, a tight diamond interchange. He stated that the town of Granite Falls is not in favor of the at-grade option at his intersection and one of their big arguments against it is the lack of access to Dudley Shoals and Grace Chapel, where 30% of their calls come from. He said EMS still has access to those areas from Dudley Shoals Road, which is a half block from the EMS station in downtown Granite Falls, so the Town's argument doesn't carry much weight in his opinion. He would like to be kept posted moving forward.

Support Flyover

74. Anne Seitz (P.O. Box 335, 20 Montclair Avenue, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment (2): Ms. Seitz prefers Alternative #2, a flyover, for the Grace Chapel Road intersection.

Support Trumpet Interchange

75. James Holdon (4866 Sage Meadow Circle)

Comment: Mr. Holdon prefers Alternative #3, a trumpet interchange, for the Grace Chapel Road intersection. He also feels a noise barrier wall is needed for the Sage Meadow subdivision.

76. Julie Hall (juliedhall0113@gmail.com)

Comment (2): Ms. Hall prefers Alternative #3, a trumpet interchange, for the Grace Chapel Road intersection.

B.4. Comments Not Requesting Additional Information
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The following citizens provided written comments opposing the project, but did not request additional information. No response is needed.

77. Shelia Walker-Joplin (1718 Cahah Mountain Road, Hudson, NC 28638)

Comment: Ms. Walker-Joplin does not feel a 6-lane road is needed and hopes this widening will be put on hold for many years.

78. Garry Bradshaw (1149 Moller Creek Road, Lenoir, NC, 28645)

Comment: Mr. Bradshaw feels the road is fine the way it is today.

79. Crystal Kirby

Comment: Ms. Kirby is opposed to the project, because she feels it will create more problems than it solves. She said Granite Falls is a small town that isn't growing at a fast rate and does not need widening; however, Conover and Hickory areas are congested and need the widening more.

80. Dan Grogan (James D. and Nancy A. Grogan) (4992 Sage Meadow Circle, Hickory, NC 28601)

Comment: Mr. Grogan has no problem with his property being taken, because he has other land to rebuild on.

81. Paul Solomon

Comment: Public utilities/water and sewer are located from 13th Street SW to Grace Chapel Road. A sewer force main hangs on the bridge at the river crossing.

82. Shawn Yamber, Fair Value Stores, Inc. (31 Pinewood Road, Granite Falls, NC 28630)

Comment: Mr. Yamber is opposed to this project because he believes customers will not be willing to go north past Lower Cedar Valley Road to make a U-turn, which will make their business inconvenient for customers and cause their business to cease to exist. He said the current access is vital to maintaining a viable business. He also stated that customers trying to leave and get back to Pinewood Road Ext. would face an even worse situation. He realizes the value of US 321 and needed improvements, but wants other alternatives to be evaluated.

C. Citizens Requesting Meeting Minutes

The following citizens provided written comments that they would like minutes of the post-hearing meeting mailed to them.

- Bethany Lingle (4870 Pooveys Grove Church Road, Granite Falls, NC)
- Phil Shell (6724 Lakeview Terrace, Hickory, NC 28601)
- Lois Williams, The Rosemyr Corp. (903 US 321, Hickory)

D. Other Discussion

NCDOT (PDEA, Roadway, TPB, and Division) and Greater Hickory MPO staff met with Representative Jay Adams on August 19, 2016. He asked NCDOT to consider two changes to the design:

- At Clement Boulevard, he felt that the 2011 traffic forecast was too high because the area around the stadium has not developed as quickly as expected, and that an interchange is not justified. The original desire from the community was for an interchange at this location, and a superstreet design would not work based on the current traffic forecast.
- At 13th Street, he suggested moving the interchange to the 1st and 2nd Avenue pairs to reduce traffic through Clement and more effectively utilize the existing major thoroughfares.

Attendees discussed the need to update the traffic forecast for this project.

- The original traffic forecast was completed in 2009 for a design year of 2035. The forecast was based on the 2008 regional travel demand model.
- The forecast was updated in 2011, extrapolating to a design year of 2040. The forecast continued to use the 2008 regional travel demand model. Volumes were generally lower because of the recession and associated changes in traffic volumes and development pressures.
- The latest regional travel demand model is from 2011. An update is underway now, and is expected to be finished in Spring 2017.
- A new forecast would be based on a design year of 2040. It could either use the 2011 model, or wait for the new model.

A new schedule has been proposed:

- End of November/Early December – update the traffic forecast for intersections of interest (MDI driveway, Grace Chapel Road, Clement Boulevard, and 13th/1st/2nd Avenue)
- End of December – receive approval of traffic forecast for four intersections
- End of January – update the traffic forecast for the rest of the corridor
- End of January – revise designs for four intersections
- Mid-February – Merger CP 3 meeting
- End of February – draft FONSI
- End of April – FONSI approved
- FY 2018 – project let for Design-Build

Teresa Gresham will contact Brian Wert and Daniel Sellers with the Transportation Planning Branch to discuss options and need for updating the forecast. [This has been completed, and the traffic forecast update is underway.]

E. Selection of a Preferred Alternative

Three alternatives were presented at the public hearing at both Falls Avenue and Grace Chapel Road One. Elsewhere along the corridor, one typical section and roadway alignment was carried forward for detailed study and presented at the public hearing. Attendees discussed the options at both locations.

Falls Avenue

- The superstreet had been studied because it was anticipated to have fewer physical impacts and operate sufficiently. However, the Town supports a tight diamond, and the majority of citizens who expressed a preference also support a tight diamond.
- **NCDOT selects the Tight Diamond Interchange Alternative as their recommended alternative.**
- Attendees discussed potential minor design changes: (1) roundabouts at the ramp termini, (2) narrowing the bridge to 2 lanes with pedestrian facilities, and (3) realigning Archer Street into the ramp intersection. These changes will be considered during the next phase of design, but will not affect selection of the Tight Diamond Interchange Alternative as the recommended alternative.

Grace Chapel Road

- There was not a majority support for any particular alternative.
- The Division would prefer a superstreet design if three turn lanes weren't needed, especially if a more traditional (left in instead of left out) design would work.
- Attendees discussed the current traffic forecast at this location, which assumed growth of traffic volumes from 9,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2011 to 21,000 vpd in 2040. The forecast was prepared in 2011 by NCDOT (Paul Schroeder, Transportation Planning Branch). The forecast was based on the 2008 model. The network may have been modified for the 2011 forecast, but still would not have included New Farm Road, which was completed more recently.

- **NCDOT will wait to recommend an alternative until it is determined if the traffic should be updated at this location.**

In addition to these two locations, attendees also discussed potential options at the two locations identified by Representative Jay Adams.

Clement Boulevard

- Representative Adams recommended consideration of an at-grade superstreet intersection rather than an interchange.
- If a new traffic forecast will be prepared, this location will be revisited.
- Ms. Surrat noted that the City of Hickory is doing a road diet on Clement Boulevard east of US 321.
- **Attendees agreed to retain a proposed interchange at Clement Boulevard at this time.**

13th Street

- Representative Adams recommended moving this interchange to use the 1st and 2nd Avenue one-way pair. The City of Hickory and the MPO agree with investigating new options as long as it does not delay the project
- **NCDOT will consider a revised design using the current traffic forecast.**

If anyone has any questions or comments regarding this information, please contact Kevin Moore, PE, Roadway Design Project Engineer at 919-707-6287.

KM/trg

cc:
Attendees